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# Government and Forestry.

*Evening Session, December 30.*

(Held jointly with American Forestry Association.)

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## GOVERNMENT FORESTRY ABROAD.

BY GIFFORD PINCHOT.

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The nations whose forest policies might justly claim attention are so numerous that I shall confine my remarks chiefly to those with which I have been fortunate enough to gain some personal acquaintance.

In Prussia the relation of the State to the forests which it owns is simple and rational. The enormous capital which they represent is not permitted to lie idle, and the forest as a timber producer has taken its place among the permanent features of the land. The government has done the only wise thing by managing its own forests through its own forest officers.

With respect to the forests belonging to towns, villages and other public bodies, the State prevents absolutely their treatment under improvident or wasteful methods, nor does it allow any measures to be carried into effect which may deprive posterity of the enjoyment which it has a right to expect.

The relations of the State to those forests, which belong to private proprietors, are of much less inti-

mate nature. The basis of these relations is, however, the same. To quote from Donner, now head of the Forest Service:

“The duty of the State to sustain and further the well-being of its citizens regarded as an imperishable whole implies the right and the duty to subject the management of all forests to its inspection and control.”

In Switzerland the development rather than the actual condition of forest policy may best claim attention. This development is of peculiar interest to the people of the United States, because in its beginning may be traced many of the characteristics of the situation here and now, and because the Swiss, like the Americans, were confronted by the problem of a concrete forest policy extending over the various States of a common Union.

The work of forest reform was begun soon after the middle of the last century, and has been continued in later times chiefly through the Swiss Forestry Association, founded in 1843. It has moved successfully, among other things, for the foundation of the forest school, the examination of the higher mountain forests, the passage of a new forest law and the correction of the torrents. Partly at least as a result of its efforts a federal forest inspector was appointed in 1875, and a year later the first forest law of the confederation was passed. The passage of this law was immediately followed almost everywhere by the appointment of trained forest officers, and all the cantons whose forest legislation was defective amended or completed it.

In France, which stands with Germany at the head of the nations as regards thoroughness of

forest policy, the large extent of State and other public forests is in admirable condition. The training of French forest officers, and to some extent the treatment of French forests, differs widely from those which distinguish Prussia. That this training extends over two years instead of the six to eight spent by the Prussian candidates cannot but make the task of national forest administration seem easier, especially in view of the excellent and very often the wonderful results which the French foresters have achieved. Perhaps their most brilliant work has been accomplished in the correction of the torrents in the Alps, Pyrenees and Cevennes. The whole story of *reboisement* in France is full of the deepest interest in comparison with the past history and probable future of our mountain forests.

“History has proved,” says Dr. Schlich, “that the preservation of an appropriate percentage of the area as forests cannot be left to private enterprise in India, so that forest conservancy has for sometime past been regarded as a duty of the State.” The formation of the reserved State forests was the first step. These forests have been gradually brought under simple but systematic methods of management which aim at effective protection, an efficient system of regeneration, and cheap transportation, the whole under well considered and methodical working-plans. The results of this enlightened policy are conspicuous in the great fact that the forests yield and will permanently yield the supply of timber and forest produce which the population requires, in the beginning which has been made towards regulating the water supply in the mountains, and in the steadily increasing capital value and annual net revenue of the State forests.

Dr. Schlich's statement of the destructive tendencies of private forest ownership in India might with equal truth have been made as a general proposition. It is the salient fact which the history of the forests of the earth seem to teach, but nowhere have the proofs of its truth taken such gigantic proportions as in the United States. We are surrounded by the calamitous results of the course we are now pursuing. The peoples whose intelligence and foresight are most worthy of respect have shown that the solution of the problem of forest protection lies in forest management.

### *Discussion.*

Mr. Peters: Although State ownership of forests is somewhat contrary to our accustomed mode of thinking, the importance of it is such that it is about time that we began to accustom ourselves to it. A recommendation has been made for the preservation of the Rocky Mountain forests and the forests of the Sierra Nevada as government forests. It seems to me that the policy of Prussia, which has just been mentioned, should be imitated in the acquisition of forests where it is especially desirable, and it would seem to be especially desirable in portions, at least, of the Appalachian Mountains. Would it not be a good plan for the government to be authorized, or the proper department of the government, to receive forest lands offered in tracts large enough to make it worth while, if they are below a certain sum? I remember forest land which was for sale at from fifty cents to one dollar per acre. I simply suggest whether something of this kind might not be worth the attention of the Association.

Professor Folwell: As a member of the Economic Association and a resident of a State which has possessed large pine forests, I want to warn all the ladies and gentlemen who are here present that the passage of a law by Congress will not accomplish the work. If any of the gentlemen are acquainted with the power and resources of pine-land rings, you will understand what I mean. It will take years of fighting to beat these rings. They are the smartest men in the country, they will employ the best of counsel, and they have an experience in circumventing the government which will be of the greatest use to them.

THE CONDITION OF THE FORESTS ON THE PUBLIC LANDS  
OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY EDWARD A. BOWERS, ESQ.

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It is necessary to recognize at the outset that little improvement need be expected in the condition of the public forests of our country, until there is a radical change in the laws relating to them. These forests are steadily being destroyed and injured to such an extent that their preservation even now, to some minds, is problematical. The text of this article is—*The laws Provide neither an adequate method for the Protection of the Public Timber, nor for its Disposition in Regions where its Proper Use is Imperative.*

Aside from the relatively unimportant timber areas of the South, the present forest lands of the United States are situated either high up on the sides of the